Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-49.   (Canceled)

50.   (Canceled)

51.   (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 5060, further comprising returning an indication of the determined set of electronic files.

52.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 51 wherein returning the indication of the set of electronic files includes returning a list of electronic files that contain content that matches the specified characteristic.

53.   (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 50 60 wherein storing and indexing the metadata in the second server unit includes storing and indexing the metadata in a database.

54.   (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 50 60 wherein storing the received recursively extracted electronic files in the searchable format in the first server unit includes storing the received recursively extracted electronic files in a searchable text format.

55.   (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 50 60 wherein the legal proceeding is a discovery proceeding that is part of a lawsuit, a mergers and acquisitions proceeding, or a due diligence effort.

56.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~50~~ 60 wherein receiving the plurality of electronic files that are subject to the legal proceeding, the electronic files produced by at least one party involved in the legal proceeding, comprises:

receiving, from the information system that is external to the computer system for analyzing data for legal purposes, at least some electronic files that have been previously exchanged between the at least one party and another party prior to the legal proceeding, the external information system belonging to the at least one party of the legal proceeding and having stored therein these electronic files, wherein the plurality of electronic files are received at the computer system during the legal proceeding, the computer system not belonging to any party of the legal proceeding.

57.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~50~~ 60 wherein the received electronic files include stored emails, and wherein storing ~~and indexing~~ the metadata ~~associated with the received electronic files~~ in the second server unit includes storing ~~and indexing~~ threading information associated with the emails.

58.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~50~~ 60 wherein receiving the plurality of electronic files that are subject to the legal proceeding from the external information system includes receiving an electronic calendar, electronic schedule, spreadsheet, word-processing file, electronic files arranged in the directory structure, or graphical data.

59.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~50~~ 60 wherein storing ~~and indexing~~ the metadata ~~associated with the received electronic files~~ in the second server unit includes storing ~~and indexing~~ metadata associated with a native format of each of the received electronic files.

60.   (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 50, further comprising:~~A method in a computer system for analyzing data produced for legal purposes, the method comprising:

receiving, from an information system that is external to the computer system for analyzing data produced for legal purposes, a plurality of electronic files that are stored in a data structure arranged according to a directory structure, that are subject to a legal proceeding, and that are produced by at least one party involved in the legal proceeding;

recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files from a plurality of paths of ~~a~~ the data structure that is received from the external information system;

storing the recursively extracted electronic files in a searchable format in a first server unit using, including storing textual content of the recursively extracted electronic files in the searchable format in the first server unit;

obtaining ~~and indexing~~ the metadata from each of the recursively extracted electronic files, and storing the metadata in a second server unit in a manner that preserves directory structure information of the received data structure;

converting the recursively extracted electronic files to a read-only format, and storing the electronic files in the read-only format in a third server unit; ~~and~~

~~indexing textual content of the recursively extracted electronic files to provide the searchable format~~

receiving a request for electronic files having a specified characteristic; and

processing the stored metadata to determine a set of electronic files having the specified characteristic, thereby facilitating processing of the determined set of electronic files for legal purposes.

61.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 60 wherein at least some of the recursively extracted electronic files include emails having attachments, the method further comprising:

storing the emails in a read-only format in the third server unit and in the searchable format in the first server unit;

separately storing the attachments in a read-only format <u>in the third server unit</u> and in a searchable format <u>in the first server unit</u>; and

storing ~~and indexing~~ metadata associated with the attachments <u>in the second server unit</u>.

62. (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 60 wherein recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files from the plurality of paths of the data structure received from the external information system includes recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files from a storage medium delivered from the external information system in response to a production request issued during the legal proceeding.

63. (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 60 wherein recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files includes recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files using application programs that can read and translate the electronic files.

64. (Currently Amended)   The method of claim ~~50~~<u>60</u>, further comprising providing a user interface to display an electronic file having the specified characteristic and that is responsive to the request, and wherein the user interface is usable to apply legal annotations to the electronic files having the specified characteristic and that are responsive to the request.

65. (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 64 wherein the legal annotations include at least one of reviewed, privileged, hot, responsive, or witness preparation annotations.

66. (Currently Amended)   The method of claim ~~50~~<u>60</u>, further comprising providing summary information indicative of electronic files that are available to be processed to determine the set of electronic files having the specified characteristic.

67. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~50~~60, further comprising processing the electronic files in the searchable format to determine the set of electronic files having the specified characteristic.

68. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~50~~-60 wherein receiving the request for electronic files having a specified characteristic includes receiving a request that specifies at least one of the following: a word in an electronic file, a sender of an email, a recipient of an email, a subject of an email, a date associated with an electronic file, properties information associated with the electronic file, an annotation to an electronic file, attachment information, a case identifier, or a collection name.

69. (Currently Amended) A method in a computer system for facilitating the analysis of data produced for legal purposes, the method comprising:

receiving, from an information system that is external to the computer system for analyzing data produced for legal purposes, a plurality of electronic files that are subject to a legal proceeding, that are produced for purposes of the legal proceeding by at least one party involved in the legal proceeding, and that are stored prior to being received by the computer system in a data structure associated with the external information system;

recursively extracting from the data structure the plurality of electronic files received from the external information system;

converting each of the recursively extracted electronic files to a searchable format, and storing in a first server unit content of the converted files in the searchable format;

obtaining and ~~indexing~~ storing in a second server unit metadata from each of the recursively extracted electronic files;

converting each of the recursively extracted electronic files to a displayable format, and storing the converted files in the displayable format in a third server unit; and

~~converting each of the recursively extracted electronic files to a searchable format and indexing content of each converted electronic file; and~~

responding to a request for at least one file having specified characteristics using at least one of the stored metadata or the ~~indexed~~ stored content.

70.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 69 wherein receiving the plurality of electronic files that are subject to the legal proceeding further comprises:

receiving, from the external information system, at least some electronic files that have been previously exchanged between the at least one party and another party prior to the legal proceeding and stored in the data structure, the external information system and the data structure belonging to the at least one party of the legal proceeding, and

the computer system not belonging to the at least one party .

71.   (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 69 wherein the received electronic files include emails, at least some of which have attachments, the method further comprising:

storing the emails in the displayable format in the third server unit and in the searchable format in the first server unit;

separately storing the attachments in a displayable format in the third server unit and in a searchable format in the first server unit; and

storing ~~and indexing~~ metadata associated with the attachments in the second server unit.

72.   (Currently Amended)   The method of claim 71 wherein obtaining and ~~indexing~~ storing metadata from each of the recursively extracted electronic files includes obtaining and ~~indexing~~ storing in the second server unit threading information associated with the emails.

73.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 69 wherein recursively extracting the electronic files from the data structure comprises:

determining which versions of applications can respectively read each of the electronic files in the data structure; and

using the determined versions of the applications to read their respective electronic files.

74.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 69, further comprising:

receiving a query for electronic files having a specified characteristic;

returning a response to the query, the response being indicative of electronic files that have the specified characteristic; and

presenting a copy of at least one of these electronic files in a user interface along with legal annotation selections to apply to the copy of the electronic file.

75.   (Currently Amended)   An article of manufacture for a computer system, the article of manufacture comprising:

a machine-readable medium having instructions stored thereon to cause a computer processor to analyze data produced for legal purposes, by:

loading, from an information system external to the computer system having the machine-readable medium, a plurality of electronic files that are subject to a legal proceeding, that are produced by at least one party involved in the legal proceeding, and that are stored in a data structure associated with the external information system prior to being loaded at the computer system;

recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files from the loaded data structure;

converting and storing in a first server unit content of the recursively extracted electronic files to provide a searchable format;

obtaining and ~~indexing~~ storing in a second server unit metadata from each of the recursively extracted electronic files;

converting the recursively extracted electronic files to a displayable format, and storing the converted files in the displayable format in a third server unit; and

~~converting and indexing content of the recursively extracted electronic files to provide a searchable format~~.

76.   (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of claim 75 wherein the instructions to load the electronic files include instructions to:

load, from the external information system, at least some electronic files that have been exchanged between the at least one party and another party prior to the legal proceeding and stored in the data structure, the external information system and the data structure belonging to the at least one party of the legal proceeding, and the computer system not belonging to the at least one party of the legal proceeding.

77.   (Currently Amended) The article of manufacture of claim 75 wherein the loaded electronic files include emails, at least some of which have attachments, the machine-readable medium further including instructions stored thereon to:

store the emails in a displayable format in the third server unit and in the searchable format in the first server unit;

separately store the attachments in a displayable format in the third server unit and in a searchable format in the first server unit; and

~~storing~~store ~~and indexing~~ metadata associated with the attachments and threading information associated with the emails in the second server unit.

78.   (Previously Presented) The article of manufacture of claim 75 wherein the loaded electronic files include an electronic calendar, an electronic schedule, a spreadsheet, a word-processing file, electronic files arranged in the directory structure, or graphical data.

79.   (Canceled)

80. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim ~~79~~82, further comprising a means for returning an indication of the determined set of electronic files and for presenting summary information.

81. (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim ~~79~~ 82 wherein the means for receiving the plurality of electronic files that are subject to the legal proceeding, the electronic files produced as part of the legal proceeding by at least one party involved in the legal proceeding, comprises:

a means for loading onto the computer system during the legal proceeding, from the external information system, at least some electronic files that have been previously exchanged between the at least one party and another party prior to the legal proceeding and stored on the external information system, wherein the external information system belongs to the at least one party of the legal proceeding, and wherein the computer system does not belong to the at least one party of the legal proceeding.

82. (Currently Amended) ~~The computer system of claim 79, further comprising:~~A computer system for analyzing data produced for legal purposes, the computer system comprising:

a means for receiving, from an information system that is external to the computer system for analyzing data produced for legal purposes, a plurality of electronic files that are subject to a legal proceeding, the electronic files produced as part of the legal proceeding by at least one party involved in the legal proceeding;

a means for recursively extracting the plurality of electronic files from ~~a~~ the data structure provided from the external information system;

a means for converting the extracted electronic files to a searchable format using a conversion engine and for storing the converted electronic files in the searchable format in a first server unit, including a means for generating and storing in the first server unit textual content of the recursively extracted electronic files to provide the searchable format;

a means for converting, including means for obtaining and ~~indexing~~ storing in a second server unit using the conversion engine, ~~the~~ metadata from each of the recursively extracted electronic files;

a means for converting the recursively extracted electronic files to a read-only format using the conversion engine, and for storing the converted electronic files in the read-only format in a third server unit; ~~and~~

~~a means for generating and indexing textual content of the recursively extracted electronic files to provide the searchable format~~

a means for receiving a request for electronic files having a specified characteristic; and

a means for processing the stored metadata to determine a set of electronic files having the specified characteristic.

83.   (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 82 wherein at least some of the recursively extracted electronic files include emails having attachments, the computer system further comprising:

a means for storing the emails in a read-only format in the third server unit and in the searchable format in the first server unit;

a means for separately storing the attachments in a read-only format in the third server unit and in a searchable format first server unit; and

a means for storing ~~and indexing~~ metadata associated with the attachments in the second server unit.

84.   (Currently Amended)   The computer system of claim ~~79~~82, further comprising a user interface means for generating the request and for presenting an indication of the set of electronic files having the specified characteristic, the user interface means including a means for adding annotations to a copy of an electronic file presented thereon, the annotations indicating information useful for the legal proceeding.

85.   (Currently Amended) A computer system to analyze data produced for legal purposes, the computer system comprising:

at least one recursive engine to receive, from an information system that is external to the computer system to analyze data produced for legal purposes, a plurality of electronic files that are subject to a legal proceeding, the electronic files produced by and belonging to at least one party involved in the legal proceeding and stored in a storage medium, and to extract the plurality of electronic files from the storage medium;

a conversion engine to convert the recursively extracted electronic files to a searchable format, and to obtain metadata associated with the received electronic files;

a first server unit coupled to the ~~recursive~~ conversion engine to store the ~~received~~ converted electronic files in ~~a~~ the searchable format;

a second server unit coupled to the ~~recursive~~ conversion engine to store ~~and index~~ the obtained metadata associated with the received electronic files; and

another engine in communication with the first and second server units to receive a request for electronic files having a specified characteristic and to process the ~~indexed~~ stored metadata to determine a set of electronic files having the specified characteristic.

86.   (Previously Presented) The computer system of claim 85, further comprising at least one application that can read a format of the received electronic files.

87.   (Currently Amended) The computer system of claim 85 wherein the received electronic files include emails, at least some of which have attachments, the computer system further including:

at least one controller coupled to the recursive engine to determine a server unit to which to send the extracted electronic files; and

a third server unit coupled to the controller to store the emails in a displayable format and to separately store the attachments in the displayable format, wherein the first server unit stores the attachment a searchable format and wherein the second server unit stores ~~and~~

index metadata associated with the attachments and threading information associated with the emails.

88.   (Currently Amended)   The computer system of claim 85, further comprising a first administration program to generate a directory structure in the first server unit that indexes stores text data stored therein.

89.   (Previously Presented)   The computer system of claim 88, further comprising a second administration program to generate catalog and directory parameters that reference the directory structure in the first server unit and the text data stored therein.

90.   (Previously Presented)   The computer system of claim 85, further comprising at least one administration program to generate catalog and database parameters that reference the second server unit and the metadata stored therein.

91.   (Currently Amended)   The computer system of claim 85, further comprising another server unit, coupled between a client terminal and the another engine, to receive the request from the client terminal and to pass the request to the another engine to allow the another engine to apply the specified characteristic in the request to at least one of the first and second server units to the database, the another engine being configured to return responsive results of the request to another server unit.

92.   (Previously Presented)   The computer system of claim 91 wherein the another server unit includes a virtual directory to reference data stored in the first and second server units.

93.   (Currently Amended)   The computer system of claim 85, further comprising:

a server ~~having~~ coupled to the another engine and to the first and second server units;

a user authentication unit communicatively coupled to the server to control access to the server;

a user information unit communicatively coupled to the server to store information associated with users authenticated by and provided with access by the user authentication unit; and

an administration unit to support services between the server and the user authentication and user information units.

94.   (Previously Presented)   The computer system of claim 93 wherein the server supports legal annotation tools on a user interface that is arranged to present a copy of an electronic file that has the specified characteristic.

95.   (Previously Presented)   The computer system of claim 85 wherein the first and second server units comprise part of a database system.

96.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 69 wherein the data structure stores the files according to a directory structure and wherein the obtaining and ~~indexing~~ storing metadata from each of the recursively extracted electronic files in the second server unit further comprises:

obtaining and ~~indexing~~ storing in the second server unit metadata that preserves information regarding the directory structure in which the files are stored.

97.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 69 wherein the responding to the request for at least one file having specified characteristics using at least one of the metadata or the ~~indexed~~ stored content comprises:

responding to a request for at least one file having characteristics that are based upon an arrangement of the at least one file in the directory structure using the ~~indexed~~ stored metadata.